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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PAKISTANI IDPS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: As military operations continue in Dir and Buner in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), access to these areas remains the greatest impediment to the UN and others conducting registration, assessing needs, and delivering aid. Higher internally displaced persons (IDP) estimates range from 50-75,000 for Lower Dir and a totally unverified 30-35,000 for Buner. Registration of new IDPs got underway April 30 in Mardan, Charsadda and Swabi Districts. UN agencies have agreed to establish two new IDP camps: one for 1,000 refugee families at Jalala in Mardan District and the other for 250 families at Yar Hussain in Swabi District. Site development for both camps has begun. Another 1,000 families could be immediately accommodated in Jalozei. End Summary

Humanitarian Access Remains the Foremost Issue
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¶2. (SBU) The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) convened an emergency meeting on IDPs on May 1 for GoP and various implementing partners, including the UN and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Meeting participants stressed that access for the NWFP Ministry of Social Welfare and UNHCR, who are responsible for registration of IDPs, and other players, such as ICRC, remains the greatest impediment to clarifying IDP numbers, conducting needs assessments and delivering aid. Roads into the districts are blocked, and cell phone coverage in Buner is also down, preventing communications with people trapped inside. International agencies asked the NDMA to speak with the military and local authorities to facilitate access. A USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) implementing partner team that tried to enter Lower Dir on May 1 was blocked by military at Chakdara, the entry point into the district.

Lack of GOP-Coordinated Information
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¶3. (SBU) Media, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR and Embassy contacts report continued operations against militants in Buner and targeted operations, searches, and sporadic firing from military bases in parts of Lower Dir as of May 1. NWFP Chief Minister Haider Hoti told Peshawar Principal Officer on April 30 that he expects Dir and Buner operations to be completed within about a week. (However, the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CAR) in Timergara, Lower Dir, informed UNHCR on April 30 that military operations had already ended in Dir.) UNHCR is receiving reports that the Taliban are scattered around Buner District. Bombing of their positions continues

in the villages of Sultanwas, Sangar, Karakar, Jowarah, Kalil Kandau, Ambela, Gukand and Daggar. People continue fleeing these areas and moving toward Swabi and other areas. OCHA reports on May 1 that, according to Pakistan Army sources, fighting is subsiding in Lower Dir, and the curfew has been relaxed in the area between 8 am and 1 pm.

IDP Numbers

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¶4. (SBU) In discussions of the number of new IDPs created by the military operations in Lower Dir and Buner districts, estimates by participants at the NDMA-convened meeting ranged as high as 60) 70,000 in Lower Dir and 30,000 from Buner. An OFDA implementing partner that works in Lower Dir and Buner reported that the NWFP Social Welfare Department estimates that there are 75,000 IDPs from Lower Dir (95 percent of whom are still in Lower Dir) and 35,000 from Buner (70 percent of whom are still in Buner). Concrete numbers from places like Timergara, where improvised camps have been set up and families have been counted, do not support these large estimates, however. OCHA says that overall displacement from Dir is about 50,000 individuals, of whom 10,000 have been accommodated in educational buildings in Dir. About 40,000 individuals displaced from Dir are either staying with relatives in safer areas within Dir district or have left Dir for districts like Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda and Peshawar.

¶5. (SBU) UN OCHA also reports as of April 30 that the total number of IDPs displaced from Bajaur and Mohmand agencies and

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SWAT district (excluding Dir and Buner districts) is 92,239 families/556,539 individuals. About 14,656 families are living in 11 IDP camps in Lower Dir, Malakand, Charsadda, Nowshera and Peshawar while 462,912 individuals/77,583 families are outside camps living either in rented houses or with relatives.

Steps Toward Providing Additional IDP Assistances

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¶6. (SBU) International agencies are moving ahead where possible to provide relief to Pakistan IDPs. Registration of new IDPs got underway April 30 in Mardan, Charsadda and Swabi Districts, although few families have thus far shown up to be registered. As a result of site assessments this week, UN agencies have agreed to establish two new IDP camps: one for 1,000 refugee families at Jalala in Mardan District and the other for 250 families at Yar Hussain in Swabi District. UNICEF is making water/sanitation preparations; UNHCR is initially providing 200 tents at Jalala, and local authorities have thus far put up forty tents at Yar Hussain. UNHCR and WFP are ready to distribute food and NFIs as people register. Site development for the camps began May 1, and UNICEF implementing partners have already begun to set up water and sanitation systems. The Yar Hussain site has a borehole well nearby that can be used, but for the time being water will be tankered into both camps. Communal latrines, with separate sites for men and women, are being prepared as an interim measure while UNHCR completes laying out the camp sites over the next few days. Thereafter UNICEF will provide latrines for family or clan units as they have done in other established camps.

¶7. (SBU) UN OCHA reports that 1,000 families/about 6,000 individuals from Dir and Buner could be immediately accommodated in Jalozi IDP camp, Nowshera district, while UNHCR and CAR are ready to register 5,000 more families at Jalozi and Kacha Gari in Peshawar over the short-term. (According to UNHCR, as of April 30, 480 families had gone back from Jalozi, Nowshera District, and 80 families from Kacha Gari, Peshawar District to their villages of origin in Bajaur and Mohmand.)

18. (SBU) According to the CAR, eighteen IDP families who arrived from Maidan in Lower Dir at an existing camp in Timergara (Degree College) have received tents and NFIs. Health and water/sanitation facilities are already available in the camp. CAR has pitched additional tents (63) in the camp as a contingency; an additional 500 tents are available through the Pakistani Red Crescent (PRCS), and ICRC has 449 available in Lower Dir. Most of the IDPs in Maidan are thus far staying with friends and relatives in Samarbagh or Timergara or in schools, government buildings and hotels. The PRCS has agreed to provide food to Dir IDPs, and (the Jamaat Islamiyya NGO) Al-Khidmat Foundation is also providing cooked food and other services in most of the IDP settlements in Lower Dir.

19. (SBU) An NWFP contact has told Consulate Peshawar that Al-Khidmat Foundation had not established any camps for the Buner IDPs in Swabi but was assisting IDPs and collecting data. The NWFP contact estimated that 200-300 individuals from Buner had arrived in Swabi and were staying with family and friends or in rented houses. According to the provincial government, relief for the Buner refugees will be available at the camp in Jalala. According to Consulate contact, the Al-Khidmat Foundation camps in Lower Dir currently shelter about 400-500 families, and the IDP camp established by the provincial government in Timergara thus far has received 39 families although it can accommodate another 200-300 families.

Funding for IDP Relief
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10. (SBU) As assistance agencies ramp up to meet increasing IDP flows and Embassy continues to push for increased humanitarian access, the remaining hurdle will increasingly be the availability of funds. While the programs of the 90-day Prioritization Statement of the UN,s Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (PHRP) are 96.95% funded (\$34,860,057 out of \$35,956,491), the USG will need to press

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other donors to step up to the plate when the UN issues its revised PHRP at the end of June. The revised PHRP will include return packages and funding to rebuild for IDPs from Dir and Swat.

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